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Tuesday,
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ADDRESS BY DAVID K.E. BRUCE,

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'S,

AT A DINNER IN CELEBRATION OF THE BI-CENTENARY OF

KING GEORGE IV, AT THE ROYAL PAVILION, BRIGHTON,

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 1962.

I fear I approach the subject of the Regency with a transatlantic naivete. The period has always intrigued me, as has King George IV, its exemplar.

Those who confine their reading on George IV to Thackeray might arrive, I believe, at a false estimate of his personality.

His early tutor, Bishop Head, said of him at the age of fifteen, that he would be "either the most polished gentleman or the greatest blackguard in Europe -- possibly both." The prediction was not far wrong, so complex did the pupil's character prove to be.

He disputed the title of "First Gentleman in Europe" with handsome Comte d'Artois, afterwards King Charles X of France. The latter came to a disastrous political end, whereas his British rival presided as Regent and monarch over perhaps the most glorious and successful period in his nation's history.

The patron saint of Brighton commenced life under happy auspices. The eldest of fifteen children, the good fairies had bestowed on him at birth beauty and charm. Nor did his superficial intellectual attainments fail to match his physical allure. He mastered ancient and modern languages with uncommon facility. An accomplished cavalier, he sang like a troubadour, played elegantly on the violincello, had a lifelong appreciation of the arts, so despised by his grandfather, who frankly confessed an aversion to all forms of literature and painting.

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Lord and Lady Airlie, and a Russian couple, the Poklewski-Koziels, she a former lady-in-waiting to the last Czarina.

I [redacted] met, and played tennis many years ago in the United States with Lady Zia, a sweetie. She is a descendant, by a morganatic marriage, of one of the Czars on the male side, and her maternal great-grandfather was Alexander Pushkin, [redacted] the famous poet.

I had last met the Airlies in the twenties, when he was associated with Commander J.K.L. Ross, a Canadian, and with a Spaniard, in the management of a stud near the Laurel, Maryland, race track.

The interior of Luton Hoo is uninteresting architecturally. Originally designed by Robert Adam for Lord Bute, George III's Minister, it was burned in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, and never fully restored until Sir Julius Wernher, the father of the present owner, took it in hand, in the early 1900's. Capability Brown had laid out the magnificent park.

Julius Wernher was one of the early mining and diamond magnates of South Africa. He commenced the famous collections, added to by his son, now housed at Luton Hoo. The house is gigantic and ugly, but its contents, open to 50,000 visitors a year, superb for variety and quality. The Russian objects, of which the most interesting are those produced by Faberge and his 700 employees, are the best in Great Britain. The exhibit is stiff with paintings, ivory, sculpture, tapestries, silver and silver-gilt, furniture, rugs and the rest.

We had a wonderful day there, before returning to London to dine with Jim Surtees and the children.

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